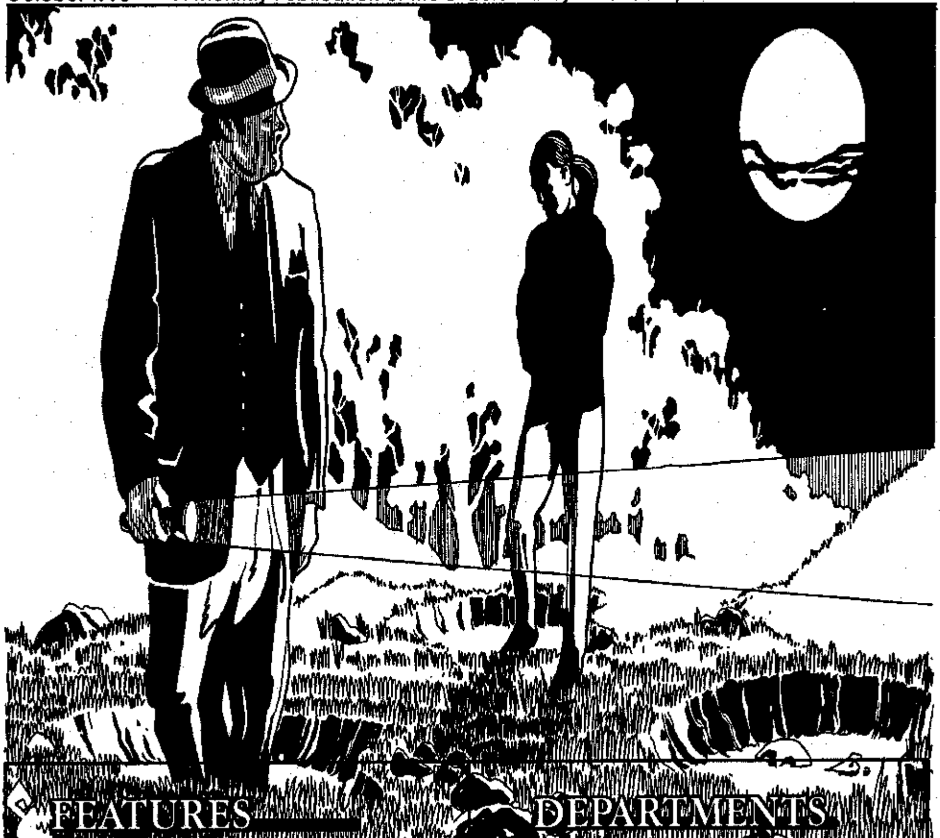
The DACE Desktop

An Information & Opinion Exchange Newsletter

October 1993 A Monthly Publication of the Diablo Valley Atari Computer Enthusiasts Issue IV.10



FEATURES

DEPARTMENTS

EDITOR
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If you have any feedback, opinions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to contact the editor or one of the officers.

DACE is an informal association of Atari computer owners formed to further expand the potential of the Atari lines by exchanging information and mutual assistance.

DACE is a non-profit organization and not affiliated with Atari Corporation. We support all present and future Atari computers.

Membership is $30/year and entitles you to receive this newsletter, AtariUser, discounts on raffles, Disks Of the Month, and participation in our DACE Marque program.

For further information, please contact Daniel A. Galant at (510)689-8256.

The Editor Speaks

Elections are right around the corner and unless something strange and mysterious happens, it looks like we'll have the same crew leading us into 1994. This can be a good and a bad thing. Good in that the people who have been running things are hard working, dedicated folks. Bad though in that no new faces could mean no new input or fresh ideas.

At the October meeting we'll be voting for a new board, or simply reinstating the existing one. If you'd like to take part in charting the course of this club over the next 12 months, please step forward and nominate yourself. You'll find there's a lot of fun to be had when you get involved.

October is also renewal month. Bring your checkbook and re-sign for another year. We have been able to maintain a steady membership over these last few years despite the woes at Atari. Now with there possibly being a bit of a light up ahead, things might actually improve. We have picked up several new members over the past few months and would hate to lose any of our older ones now that times are looking better. Remember, AtariUser is once again in publication and you can have it for free with your membership.

In the coming months we have several events planned that you won't want to miss. For starters, we hope to have a representative from Compo Software come out and demonstrate some of their products for us. Next there is the 2nd Annual Holiday Auction happening in December. We have some great items up for bid so bring lots of money.

These and other delights await you in the near future, but you'll miss out on them if you don't renew your membership and stop receiving this newsletter to remind you of what's going on. And there's the best reason of all to renew—this newsletter. Don't miss a single issue—Renew your membership today!

Till next month...

The President's Page

by Daniel A. Galant

Glendale, September 1993.

It was a time of anticipation and hope. The promise of new joys and unseen marvels awaited those who huddled outside the massive gates. The morning sun gazed down, radiating warmth and light on the masses below. It was the dawn of another show.

Within the walls of the assembly hall merchants and dignitaries had gathered to offer their wares and wisdom to those who had come to seek them out. Booth after booth, row upon row, they waited as we, the faithful, came to pay homage.

It was a time of gladness and mirth. New delights and magical wonders were there to be had, for a price. Now one could create magnificent visions from ordinary sights, alter reality into magical dreams. Studio Photo had arrived and with it, the ability to change what we see. Turn the sky from blue to green and the sea from blue to red. Make the mountains as green as the hills or have them simply vanish instead. All this we can now do, with the simple wave of our hand and the touch of a finger. Studio Photo appears wondrous indeed.

From the merchants of Gribnif we receive the gift of diversity. Now we have the ability to perform multiple tasks quickly and easily. Geneva, the gift of multitasking, is a clean solution to an old and dirty problem. Backed by the devoted wizards of Gribnif, it assuredly will grow and improve as we do. This gift does carry a price with it, but it is worth the cost.

Throughout the hall, vendors were selling their wares, old and new. The faithful who had come to spend their well earned funds, did, and were pleased with the effort. So many goods to be found in one marketplace, it was the oasis we had sought.

Some came to seek their favorite guru and pose the questions they long wanted answered. Others came simply to give thanks. For some it was a chance to meet those they counted as friends, but had never met. Still more merely wandered about, content to be around those who shared their delight.

Dignitaries wandered about, meeting with the faithful and speaking words of encouragement and faith. It was good to see them at the hall and many followers took the opportunity to speak their minds. They were friendly and answered our queries as best they could. It was good.

For myself, I must give thanks to those people I spent my time with and who answered many of my own questions. To Nathan Potechin of DMC, it was good to finally meet you. To Mario, also from DMC, you always show me new wonders and marvels. Bob from Oregon Research, nice to see you once again. Dan at Gribnif, you were helpful and considerate, I like that. And let us not forget those jolly wizards from Codehead, Tom, John and Charles. You are always friendly and fun and you know how to have a good time.

It was a good sojourn to Glendale this year and I look forward to making the pilgrimage again next year. Till then...



Bashers at the Gate

by Sam Pitluck

Migdal Kimmer affectionately passed his hand over his atari Falcon IV-X, thinking to himself how much a part of his life the computer had become. He logged onto it every day as soon as he finished his morning ritual of a coffee mocha and the San Francisco Chronicle. Working at home, he had the luxury of programming on the computer he wanted, rather than on some clone management had gotten at bargain basement rates from some wholesale distributor.

Today, however, was not the best of days for Kimmer, even though he normally would be looking forward to hours of concentrated programming at his desk, trying to work out the bugs from the latest version of his Questoff computer game. He had gotten big bucks for his previous games, and he was optimistic about gaining even more fame and fortune from his latest creation. But today, he wondered just how much longer he could continue his work. The bashers had reappeared again after several months of hibernation. They struck without warning, and although they could receive several years of imprisonment for their crime, juries often felt simpatico with these miscreants, and let them go with some petty fine or a tickle on their wrists. Yes, the bashers were in the news again, and Kimmer had an unpleasant mental itch that kept him awake at night wondering if he would be their next target.

His colleagues at Mind Games, Inc. took the bashers in stride. After years of politically correct language and cultural thought police, the bashing of everything and everyone had taken over America. Rudeness was the norm. Sensitivity was out, along with the Democrats and that guy Bill. It seemed like decades ago—although it was only five years—when one had to watch what one said and did or be labeled as a sexual harasser, racist or worse. Now the slogan was "Speak the Truth!" with the truth being whatever anyone wanted, hoped or wished it to be. Heckling replaced comedy. Don Rickles had a big comeback and even had his own television show. Andrew Dice Clay now hosted the Tonight Show, that nice speaking Leno character now being considered oldfashioned and boring.

Yeah...bashing. There were your traditional racist bashers, who took great pride in coming up with new put-down remarks, and your Jew bashers who sputtered off countless crude anti-semitic jokes. And now there was something much worse—the computer bashers. After years of the average person struggling with DOS and Windows ("Hey", Kimmer thought, "most people couldn't even handle Wordperfect for Dummies.") the bashers were having their revenge. The anti-science age was here. Back to the basics was the rage. Back to slide rules and electric typewriters. America didn't even try anymore. Why should it? Japan owned 87% of corporate America and brought in their own technowizs to take charge. Most Americans were in service oriented jobs. They followed; they didn't invent. Invention was for Japan and Korea.

He heard the noise and then there they were. Three of them armed with wooden baseball bats. The one massaging the bat in his hand, the one with the well-developed steroid pumped muscles moved forward. For someone so big, Kimmer thought, he moved surprising light on his feet. Somehow, Kimmer knew that they would come for him.

"It never hurt you," Kimmer said. He was having trouble breathing and felt his gut constrict with the fear of what was to come.

The leader's bat came down on the Falcon. Kimmer threw himself to the ground as the screen exploded and parts flew all around him. The keyboard was next to explode.

"Lousy computer!" one of the bashers said. "Stupid machine!"

Yeah, bashing had become worse. Use bats when words were not enough. The thing that we don't understand is always stupid, Kimmer thought. The leader gave Kimmer a rude push. Then the computer bashers left, leaving Kimmer to pick up the pieces.

Thought for the Month

On a clear disk, you can seek forever.

Sweat

by Don Birkbiemer

It became evident soon after she began; he felt his heart beating much faster. He was confident as he matched her every move, that is, until the exertion caused sweat to flow. Then his confidence began to falter as she told him to do it faster.

This extra effort subdued his wandering mind. He lost all consciousness of everything but her. She too was in a very focused state of mind. Here breathing was heavier now. Her movements were no faster than his. He had increased his speed. He was once again matching her every twist, turn and thrust.

She told him it was "good". He was obviously pleasing her. Her hair began to fall across her face as she moved vigorously. He noticed she had begun to perspire also. The lushness of her body evidenced itself every time she bounced in unison with him.

How long had it been going on now, he tried to recall. How much longer could he keep up this fast pace? Can I keep going until she is satisfied? Was he going to lose it too soon? Quickly he recognized the vocabulary of doubt had crept in unawares. He cleared his mind of all thoughts but staying with her every move.

Her face began to glow. She took in every deep breath of air and began to shout. "45–46–47–48–49–50. Good workout! Class is dismissed. See you all in aerobics class tomorrow."

He headed to the locker room, destined for the showers all the while agonizing over what to write for the Atari story contest.

WARNING!

The December Holiday Auction is just around the corner. This promises to be the event of the year. Save your money and then bring it all with you to the meeting. Don't miss this one, you'll regret it someday.

Chameleon Computer

by Arlyn Morgan

Have you ever wanted to have several ST computers? One for low rez, another to boot a clean system (without accessories and auto folder) or maybe medium rez running MINT. You can now do all the above with just one ST and ICDs' version 6.2.0 hard disk software.

My machine is a MEGA STe 4 with a 210 meg hard drive with seven partitions. When the ICD software boots it displays the partitions and pauses three seconds. In that three seconds you may choose the boot partition. Do nothing and the drive boots as normal 'C', but press 'I' and the boot partition is 'I' with the auto folder and accessories found on drive 'I'. Press 'D' or any other letter to match the partition and booting will proceed from the selected partition with its' unique folders and accessories. If you were to choose 'D' on my system you would find no auto programs and no accessories. This allows me to check "difficult" programs for compatibility with other programs and accessories. I also have different desktops for each partition. My low rez games play from partition 'G' with a custom icon for the games I play all the time. Since the computer is in low rez, the medium rez desktop icons are not needed.

What is the real need for this program? CDROM. With few exceptions all SCSI rom readers are plug and go IF you have an ICD ADSI to SCSI converter. If ICDs' LINK is the ADSI to SCSI converter of choice, the ROM reader must supply +5 vdc. to the LINK. I am told the Falcon does not need a converter.

Once the reader is hooked up you will need software to access the reader. There are two software packages in common use; META dos and MINT. They both have their strong points and problems.

META DOS must run from a boot partition and installs two drivers, one for HIGH SIERRA format and one for ISO9660 format. You install an icon for each on your desktop. Clicking on the icon will access the drive. I do not have any HIGH SIERRA cd roms, but it read all of the ISO9660 disks I tried. There is a problem: you CAN NOT read any file larger then 24k. A call to ICD netted a driver for MINT. I can not praise high enough the quality of prompt service given from ICD. MINT must run from a boot partition and that partition must be 'C'. The driver tries to install itself twice. Just ignore the second install. MINT will read large files but it will not read all CDs. MegaDEMO from PROFIT PRESS gave errored directories with MINT but worked correctly with META dos.

Why not run everything under MINT? Not all programs run under MINT. Word Perfect for instance. Also on my system there are more system crashes under MINT than under TOS.

There are two ATARI specific CDs, both out of print. ATARI has announced a developers CD and Walnut Creek CD has announced a PD CD. But do not just look for ATARI CDs. There are also generic CDs; GIFs Galore, thousands of gifs, CDs of clip art, and CDs from Gutenberg project, worlds great literature and ASCII text form.

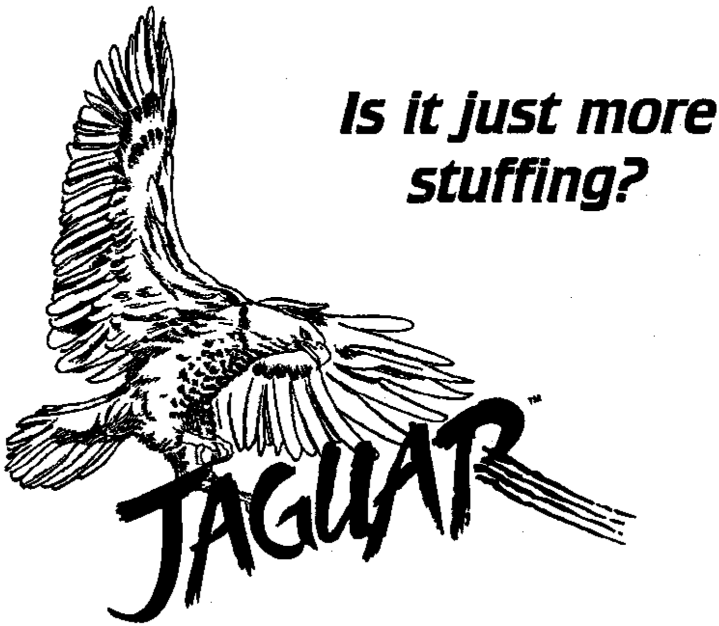
Even dos CDROMs are not without merit. There are many pictures, sound, and text files that are available nowhere else. There are several good arguments for getting a CDROM reader. You just cannot imagine the storage space. I made the mistake of printing the directory of GIFs Galore CD, twenty five pages of two side two columns.

Low cost, I have spent $5 for a PD floppy and counted myself lucky to get twenty pieces of clipart. Now one $12 CD has twenty three thousand pieces of clipart or about nineteen for a penny.

Remember, the more CDROM readers the more encouragement the developers will have to launch quality software. Developers like CDROMs because the cost of theft is to high. One CDROM is the same as about 900 DD floppies. Even at ten cents each that is still $90.00 in floppies to steal a $12.00 CD. If you did not wear out your floppy drive formatting and copying or die of old age. Think about trying to keep the 900 floppies in proper order even if you could breakup the files to fit floppies.

Disclaimer:

This is the standard disclaimer. Just because it works for me does not mean it will work for you. Your are on your own. I think copyright names are a good idea and would never think of depriving anyone of any thing.



CDROM Drives

All drives on this list are SCSI and will work with most CDROM drivers. Notice that access speed 600ms range are single speed and 350ms are double speed. Only one current drive is quad (4x) speed. If you are intesested in photo CD your choice of drives drops dramaticaly and if you want multi-session you are limmited to just a couple of newer (make that expensive) drives. Please consider this list the minimum. Look for a 'P' for photo and 'M' for multi-session drive. ARE THERE OTHER DRIVES? Yes! I think this list is correct but I am not G*D. If you want to be nice and safe buy your gear at your local computer dealer and they will hold your hand in case of trouble or get your stuff at flea markets and swapmeets. LET THE BUYER BEWARE!

Apple			
CD SC	Full	Audio	600ms
CDROM INC.			
CRI-1000	Half	Audio	350ms
CD Technology			
T3201			
T3301	Half	Audio	350ms external
Chinon			
CDA,CDS,CDX-432	Half	Audio	350ms external
CDA,CDS,CDX-433	Half	Audio	350ms ext, Photo CD
CDX-435 'P'			
Corel Systems			
KURATA/CD		Audio	380ms external
Denon			
DRD-253		Audio	400ms external
Hitachi			
CDR-1700S,1750S			350ms
Liberty Systems			
115CD-P	Half	Audio	325ms
Micro Solutions			
BACKPACK CDROM	Half	Audio	connects to printer port

Mirror Tech.			
CDR-10		Audio	350ms
NEC			
CDR-35,36,37	Half	Audio	500ms
CDR-72,73,77	Half	Audio	280ms
CDR-74 above serial #B2X04192 'P'			
CDR-82,83	Half		300ms
CDR-84 above serial #12Y00001 'P'			
Panasonic			
LK-MC5015		Audio	380ms external
Peripheral Land			
PLI CD-ROM		Audio	380ms external
Pioneer			
DRM-600	Full	Audio	600ms external, 6-disk jukebox
DRM-604X 'PM'	Full		6-disk jukebox, 4X speed
Procom Tech.			
MCDRom 650	Audio	350ms external	
REFERENCE	500	Half	Opt 500ms
Sony			
CDU-7211	Half	Audio	280ms external
Texel			
DM-3011	Half disk	No	340ms
DM-3021	Half disk	Audio	340ms
DM-3024 'P'	Half	Audio	265ms
DM-3111	Half	No	700ms
DM-3121	Half	Audio	700ms
DM-5011	Half	No	340ms
DM-5021	Half	Audio	340ms external
DM-5024 'P'	Half	Audio	265ms external
DM-5111	Half	No	700ms external
DM-5121	Half	Audio	700ms external
Toshiba			
XM-3100B	Half		350ms
XM-3101B 'P'	Half	Audio	350ms
XM-3201A	Half	Audio	350ms
XM-3201B 'PM'	Half	Audio	350ms
XM-3301E1 'P'	Half	Audio	325ms
XM-5100A	Half	Audio	380ms external



8-Bit Stuff

by John Dickerson

At the last meeting I showed off my new toy. It's the XF-551 dual drive upgrade from CSS. I shipped them my clunky stock XF-551 drive and they upgraded it and added a 3.5″ drive as drive #2 for $99 plus my shipping costs.

I still have a lot to learn about all the neat stuff this combo will do. So far I have figured out that the 5.25″ drive now works in true double density. This means I can use it for my Synfile data disks. It still won't format the second side of a disk as a single side, but you can get a gadget from CSS which fixes this problem also for about $40. I just first format the second side on my 1050 Happy if the problem comes up, and the XF-551 has no problem writing to the second side then.

It is important to figure out what DOS's to use. I like SuperDos best and have used it exclusively in the past to take the most advantage from my XF -551. It works great on the upgraded 5.25″ drive but apparently sees the 3.5″ drive as another 5.25″. It formats both drives in double sided double density which is over 2800 single sectors. Well, the 3.5″ drive should have twice as much space.

So, I dragged out the instruction manuals. SuperDos does not seem to be configurable, or at least I couldn't figure out how to do it, but I knew that MyDos is. I knew MyDos is good for upgraded drives and ramdisks, but I've never used it much because it gets buggy with enhanced density. So I fiddled with MyDos until I got it to format the 3.5″ drive to its full extent.

You may well be thinking about whether or not such a setup would really be of much use. The only advantage of a 3.5″ drive is that you can store twice as much as you can on a 5.25″. Well, so far I have found several uses for this feature. Firstly, BobTerm works very well with this MyDos configuration and I can batch download to my 3.5″ with much less hassle then before. With over 5600 sectors (2800+ double density sectors), I do not have to worry nearly so much about how much space I have left on a disk.

Secondly, the 16-bit world occasionally gives us text files that are just too big for a regular disk. I have downloaded one of these to my 3.5″ and have been able to read it with VTEX with no problems. Well, that's what I have learned so far, but I am sure there is much left to discover.

SpartaDos (which I haven't figured out yet) can be fixed up to work with this setup and I am wondering about Textpro (which I also don't know). I have a SpartaDos version of AtariWriter which works well except I haven't figured yet how to get it to access all of the 3.5″ disk. I hear there is a MyDos patch version available and I am looking for it.

If you have an XF-551 I would recommend this upgrade. Even if you don't want the 3.5" drive add on, send in your XF-551 just to get it fixed up. I bought mine not long after they came out for about $200. It was not long before it was in for service because of the flimsy connections to the IO cable sockets. Apparently many of the earlier XF-551's had this problem. And of course Atari never came up with a resonable DOS, you can't format the second side, there was no double density, and there was no software, commerical or PD that was ever developed to take advantage of it's unique properies. Mine went up into the attic until I got SuperDos Ver.5. But now since I got it fixed, I find I'm using it as my primary drive! Atari would have been better off to just upgrade the 1050 to US Doubler capacity and buy SuperDos or MyDos for it.

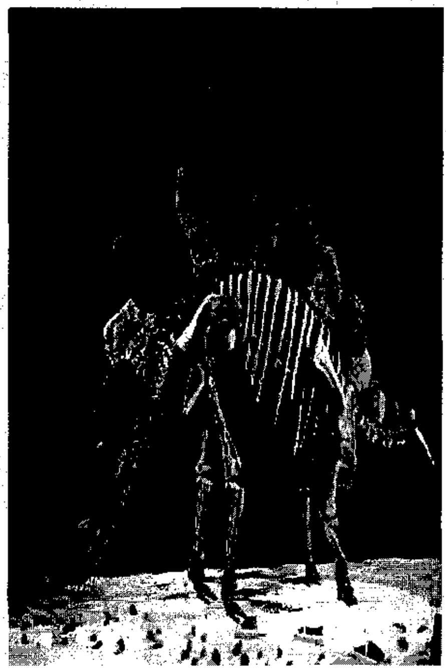
CSS's address is 903 Pixley Road, Rochester, NY 14624, Ph. 716-429-5639.

Now I will tell you about my next project. I am contemplating entering the modern world and getting a memory upgrade! I have never in the past considered such a step for long, because there was no software that I used that would take advantage of such a feature. But I have recently heard that Synfile may utilize the upgrades, and that is very exciting to me. If anyone knows anything about this, I would be delighted to hear from you. I am also wondering about whether to get a 1 or 4 meg upgrade. What's a good use for 4 megs of RAM?

The notion of a Northern California 8-bit gathering along the lines of SLCC's TextPro seminar a few years back is being discussed. Bob Scholar of SLCC and I both think it is a good idea, but neither of us has the time to organize it. However, if a number of people would each volunteer to do a small part of it, it would happen. Anybody got enthusiasm?

October is dues month. The dues for 1994 will remain at $30. Bring cash or checks to the meeting or mail a check to John Dickerson, PO Box 673, Diablo, Ca. 94528. Our club is back up to around 30 members. Let's keep it there!

When Bob Brodie of Atari came to visit us a few months ago, I remember someone asked him about Atari stock as an investment. He had no comment on this subject, which in retrospect has piqued my curiosity, as he was most candid and forthcoming on just about every other subject. I also remember he mentioned only in passing that Atari was excited about the Jaguar and nobody in the club followed up on this. Well, perhaps we all should have paid more attention and asked a few more questions.



What's in the Bag?

by Daniel A. Galant

The December Holiday Auction is just around the corner and I thought it might be a good idea to let you all in on some of the goodies we'll have up for bid. This event proved to be one of our more successful gatherings last year and you'll not want to miss this years version. Bring your wallets and your checkbooks, it should be a blast.

To start off, we have some nice 8-bit hardware up for grabs. Need some extra equipment? How about an 800? Or perhaps another drive. We have two 1050 drives up for bid. There's also an Oki color printer that can be yours for the right price. Any of these items would make a nice addition to whatever set-up you have. They also make wonderful spare parts.

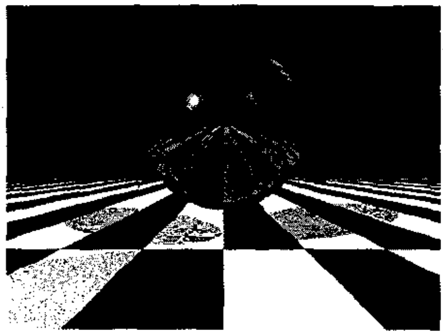
As for you 16-bits out there, you've not been left out. There will be a 1040STf up for grabs this year. It even has the mouse to go with it. We also have an SF 314 external drive. I'll be bidding on this one myself, so bring money. If you're looking for another computer or thought about joining the 16-bit world, (hear that John?), now's probably your best chance.

Software you say? Do we have any? Well how about HiSoft Basic, HiSoft Basic Pro, Quartet, Ween, Cyberdrome, Outline Art 3.0, Diamond Edge, James Pond, Dungeon Master, and more. We even have a Gravis joystick to help you play some of the games.

But that's not all. Need a calculator? Our last remaining Atari calculator will be up for bid. It's a nice little goodie and you'll hate yourself if you miss out. We also have our last Sac Expo mug to auction off. Remember those? we raffled a few off some months ago, and they were quite popular.

Last but certainly not least we a couple of items for the collector in you. First, one of those great Codehead t-shirts. Be the hit of the party. Look cool at cons. Be proud, be a Codehead. Secondly, we have one of the limited edition and very cool Calamus SL robot t-shirts. Don't let this one slip through your fingers. Be there to bid.

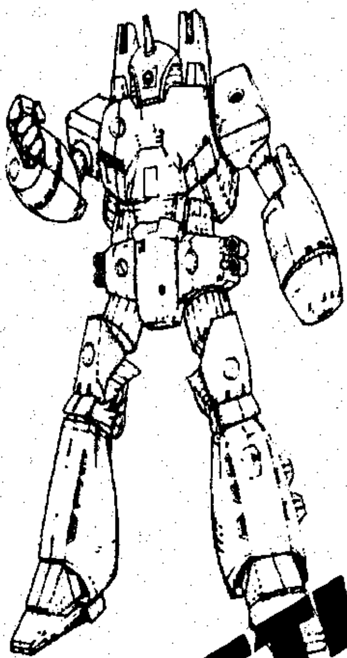
Some of the items in this years auction will have minimum bids. If we do not get the minimum bid,then that item will go back into the clubs storage facility, (my garage) and possibly become raffle material at some future occasion. Don't leave it to chance. Make sure you take it home by being at the December meeting for the 2nd Annual DACE Holiday Auction.



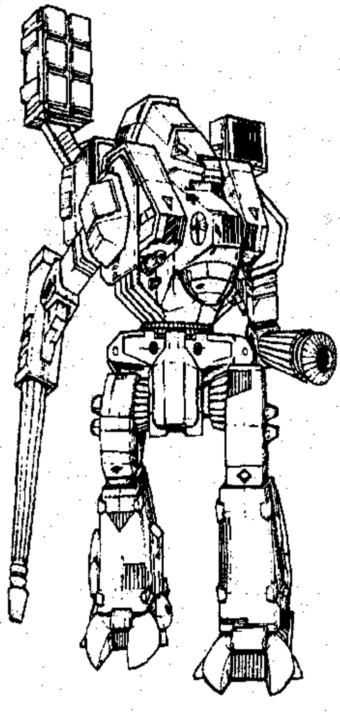


Don't keep yourself in the dark. We're here to help.

DACE



BATTLETECH®



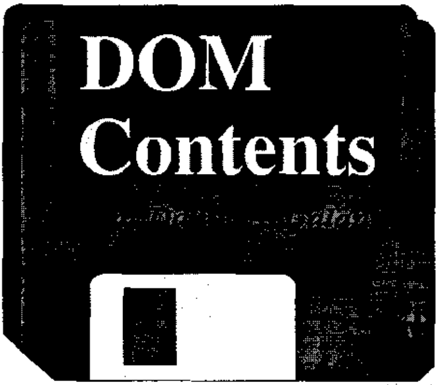
FASA CORPORATION

Whats NekST...?!

Good queSTion. October can mean but two things for DACE members; Elections and dues. That's right. It's time once again to re-elect your board for another year of stunning leadership and guidance. Come and cast your vote, it might make a difference.

Dues are indeed due this month and we hope to have a terrific renewal rate. With the current state of affairs at the mother company this should be a fairly good year for us Atarians. And let us not forget that AtariUser is once again publishing and will be available to members at the monthly meeting. We currently receive 25 copies, so it's first come first served.

You can find us at the Contra Costa Water District Bldg, located at 1331 Concord Ave. in Concord between highways 680 and 242. There is plenty of parking available and meetings are free, so be there. Meetings start at 7:00pm. Hope to see you.



If you really want to know what will be on the October disk—come to the meeting! Larry is cooking up something speacial for us this month and won't say what it is. (I know, but I'm not telling either.)

Our monthly disks have been doing rather well these last few months and for that we owe our thanks to Larry. Keep up the diligent work Larry. We do appreciate it.

Just a quick word here of congratulations to the San Francisco Giants. They had one spectacular season and provided us with some great memories. Thanks guys, it was fun.

(Like they're really gonna see this.)

Don't forget, DOM's are four dollars and all the proceeds go right back to the club. So in effect, you get great software for free. Think about it.

This Newsletter is produced on an Atari TT030 using DMC Publishing's Calamus SL. Original output is done with a Hewlett Packard LaserJet 4 printer, and is reproduced at Kinko's.

October 1993

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16, 32 Bit Disk Of Month
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POSTMASTER: Address Correction Is Requested.

A monthly publication of:

D A C E

the Diablo Valley Atari Computer Enthusiasts